

Burnham-on-Sea
Urban District Council



*Medical Officer's
Annual Report*



1949

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1949.

To the Chairman and Members of the Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting to you my sixth Annual Report and the thirty-fifth in the series of Medical Officers Reports of the Area.

The Report generally follows routine lines and it sets out in detail all the necessary information.

The Health of our Urban District has been good and the Public Health Services have been efficiently maintained.

There are two matters of great importance to which I wish to draw your attention. A growing consciousness of the steadily increasing incidence of food poisoning during recent years has stirred the public interest in present day conditions of food preparation. On every side there are demands for the observance of better standards of food hygiene by all those engaged in handling food.

I wish to emphasise the great importance of this in the field of Preventive Medicine and to ask you to secure a fuller appreciation of the very great danger that exists in unhygienic food.

Secondly: THE WELFARE OF OLD PEOPLE.

I do wish to ask that this Council does everything in its power to encourage voluntary efforts to meet the needs of Old People; e.g. by setting up a "Voluntary Old People's Welfare Committee" and a "Voluntary Home Visiting Service".

There are many Old People living among us and many of them none too happily. Why should not some small houses be specially built and set aside for these worthy folk?

We hear much about Youth these days, but I maintain that those who have travelled a good way along the road of Life—and a very rough road it has been for many of them—should not be forgotten.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEOFFREY B. EGERTON.

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (including foreshore) = 2,246 acres.

Population:—

1931 Census	...	...	...	7,705
Registrar General's Estimate for 1949				9,152

Rateable Value = £69,178.

Sum represented by a penny rate = £276 4s. 9d.

INDUSTRIES.

The chief industries in the Area are: Brick and Tile Works, Timber Yard, Bacon Factory, Perambulator Canopy and Perambulator Rug Factory, Laundry, Creamery, Returned Stores Depot, and a Factory where are made Imitation Jewellery, Small Castings, Stamp and where, in addition Electro-Plating is done.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY 1949.

Live Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	58	57	115
Illegitimate	4	2	6

121

Still Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	0	0	0

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Birth Rate:— 13.5 per 1,000.	Male	Female	Total
Deaths	47	68	115

Death Rate:— 12.5 per 1,000.

Infantile Mortality.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	0	1
Illegitimate	0	0	0

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VITAL STATISTICS.

REGISTERED BIRTHS. After allowing for Inward and Outward transfer, the Registrar General credited the Urban District with 121 Live Births for 1949: 62 males and 59 females; of these 6 were illegitimate (4 males and 2 females).

The registered number of Still Births was 3; 1 male and 2 females; there were no illegitimate Still Births.

The Birth Rate for 1949 was 13.5 per 1,000 of the population; this is lower than that for the previous year (18.2) and slightly lower than that for the country as a whole (16.7).

DEATHS. 115 were registered as having occurred in the Urban District during the year; of these 47 were males and 68 were females. The number of deaths in the 4 quarters of the year were: first quarter 30; second quarter 40; third quarter 21; fourth quarter 24.

There was 1 death of an Infant under 1 year of age; a male and legitimate.

The Death Rate for 1949 was 12.5 per 1,000 of the population; this is slightly higher than the previous year (11.7), and slightly higher than that for the country as a whole (11.7).

The following table shows the causes of death:—

All Causes: Total 115	Male 47	Female 68
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	1	0
Other forms of Tuberculosis	0	0
Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum	0	3
Cancer of Breast	0	3
Cancer of all other sites	7	8
Inter-Cranial Vascular Lesions	11	12
Heart Disease	11	23
Other Diseases of the Circulatory System	4	4
Bronchitis	2	0
Pneumonia	0	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	1
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	2	1
Other Digestive Diseases	0	1
Nephritis	2	6
Influenza	1	1
Congenital Malformation, Birth Injuries and Infantile Diseases	1	0
Suicide	1	0
Other Violent Causes	1	1
All other causes	2	3

It will be seen from the foregoing table that Heart Disease was the chief cause of death, followed closely by Disease of the Blood Vessels of the Brain.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Disease	Cases admitted		
	Total Cases Notified.	to Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Tuberculosis—Respiratory	9	—	1
Non-Respiratory	2	—	—
Scarlet Fever	5	1	—
Measles	185	—	—
Whooping Cough	9	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1	—
Acute Pneumonia	16	4	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	2	2	—
Erysipelas	2	—	—

It will be seen from the foregoing table that we were remarkably free from Epidemic Infectious illness, apart from Measles, which presented itself in epidemic form.

FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.

One case was reported during the year; it occurred during the third quarter; was due to *Salmouella* organisms. The source of infection could not be traced; this case I am pleased to report, made a satisfactory recovery.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The number of children immunised in the Area of this Authority was:— Under 5 years of age 83; 5—15 years of age 9; making a total of 92. 38 children were given a Secondary or Reinforcing injection.

No case of Diphtheria was notified in this area during this year. Immunisation against Diphtheria still continues to be a very important aspect of Preventive Medicine. This is available under the National Health Service, through the Family Doctor, in addition to the facilities provided at the Welfare Centres at Burnham and Highbridge.

SECTION 47 OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

This section provides for the removal to a suitable place of persons, who are in need of care and attention through age or disease. This step is only taken, of course, in extreme cases where the person concerned is likely to suffer injury to health by remaining in their homes, or where there is serious nuisance to other persons. It was not found necessary to take any action under this section during the year 1949.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

I. Public Health Officers of the Authority:—

Medical Officer of Health: Dr. G. B. Egerton, M.C., M.B., B.S.

Surveyor: J. M. M. Huxtable, M.I.Mun.E., M.R.S.I., A.I.W.E.

Sanitary Inspector: W. B. Graham, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

- ### II.
- (a) Laboratory Facilities—The Public Health Laboratory Service, Taunton.
 - (b) Ambulance Facilities—The St. John Ambulance Brigade, stationed at Highbridge and staffed by voluntary workers, both male and female, of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and under the control of the Somerset County Council.
 - (c) Nursing—Two District Nurses in both Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, directly controlled by the County Council, while the two local voluntary committees retain their interest in the nursing service and accept certain responsibilities in connection with the welfare of the Nurses.
 - (d) Clinics—The Infant and Child Welfare Centres held (a) in Burnham-on-Sea on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the month at the Church Hall, (b) in Highbridge on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the month at the St. John Ambulance Brigade Headquarters.

HOUSING.

There were 377 applicants for Council Houses at the end of 1949. Sixteen houses were erected during the year; two (were erected) by the Local Authority and fourteen by Private Enterprise; all sixteen houses were permanent.

In the course of erection were a further 8 permanent houses—4 by the Local Authority and 4 by Private Enterprise.

Ten buildings were converted to Flats or Dwelling Houses by Private Enterprise.

190 houses are required owing to unsatisfactory conditions, e.g. 2 families living in the same house.

No occupied houses have been condemned as totally unfit; one farmhouse was demolished and replaced by a new house on the recommendation of the Somerset County Agricultural Executive. More houses are still urgently needed in the area of our Urban District and the Council still has the problem of providing enough new houses to enable every family to have a house of its own.

SANITARY WORK.

(1) WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of this Urban District has been satisfactory in quality and quantity. Six examinations of the raw water from the main supply were made during the year. Pollution by Coliform Bacilli occurred in late September and November after heavy rain; this was cleansed by Chlorination. Twenty samples were taken of the chlorinated main supply and all were satisfactory. No action was necessary replumbo solvent action of the water. All water supplies found to be contaminated are chlorinated to the minimum requirement of the Ministry of Health.

All houses within the boundaries of the Urban District—we have a population of 9,152—are supplied from public water mains direct to the houses, none are supplied by means of stand-pipes.

The following improvements of supplies were made during the year:—

- (1) Rearrangement of certain pipework machinery at Borehole Site was made in order to provide a stand-by pumping set.
- (2) Certain defective lengths of galvanised iron pipes were replaced by Cast Iron pipe on the distribution system.
- (3) A Geographical survey was made for a new borehole.

FUTURE PROPOSALS.

A new Borehole and Machinery at Winscombe, and a new main from the source to the service reservoir at an approximate cost of £55,000.

(2) MILK SUPPLY.

- | | |
|---|----|
| (a) Total number of Registered Dairy Farms at 30th September, 1949. | 21 |
| (b) Total number of Retailers. | 12 |
| (c) Number of Producer-Retailers included in (b) | 4 |
| (d) Number of Supplementary Licences issued to dealers whose dairy is outside this area | 4 |

The sampling of milk by the Sanitary Inspector has been appreciated by the distributors and the consumption of Graded and Pasteurised Milk is increasing.

(3) ICE CREAM.

The number of premises registered for:—

(a) Manufacture	4
(b) Sale	28

Regular sampling has proved that standards of cleanliness are well maintained.

(4) FOOD.

In October of the year under review, the Highbridge Bacon Company recommenced slaughtering.

The following table gives the number of Pig Carcasses inspected and condemned.

Number killed	8603
Number inspected	1536

All Diseases except Tuberculosis.

Whole carcasses condemned	13
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	110
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease—other than tuberculosis	80%

Tuberculosis only.

Whole carcasses condemned	6
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	1407
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	920%

(5) SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

There are 7 Licenced Slaughter Houses in the district; there are no Registered Slaughter Houses; and no Slaughter Houses in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption.

The Highbridge Bacon Company recommenced slaughtering in October and meat inspection is carried out there by the Sanitary Inspector.

(6) RIVER POLLUTION.

There were no cases of River Pollution dealt with during the year.

(7) KNACKERS YARDS.

One Knackers Yard is registered in this District.

(8) SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

One old defective Manhole near Adam Street, Burnham-on-Sea, was re-built.

A Drainage Survey was in progress.

Here, I wish to acknowledge the help I have received throughout the year from Mr. Huxtable, the Surveyor, and to record my appreciation of the help I have received from Mr. Graham, the Sanitary Inspector, and of the manner in which he has performed his duties.

